

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

THE PURPLE HEART VETERAN JUSTIFICATION ACT, H.R. 3970

HON. HOWARD P. "BUCK" McKEON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to address a troubling situation that Congress can address before our wounded Veteran's hard earned medals are diminished in importance.

As you may recall last year, Congress passed S. 923 denying burial benefits to veterans convicted of Federal Capital Offenses. The primary reason for the need of this legislation was to prevent individuals such as Tim McVeigh, the convicted murderer and terrorist, from being buried in our national cemeteries. We passed this legislation by voice vote with many members speaking out in favor of its passage.

I would like to relate the story of a woman by the name of Leah Schendel. On December 18, 1980, Mrs. Schendel was brutally raped and murdered by Manuel Babbit. Mrs. Schendel was a loving mother and at the time of her death was 78 years old, less than 5 feet tall, and weighed under 100 pounds. In 1981, Mr. Babbit was convicted of the horrible murder and was sentenced to death. Mr. Babbit's final appeal was scheduled for just this past month.

How might this problem relate to the problem of the Purple Heart Medal? Well, Mr. Babbit, a convicted murderer and death penalty recipient, recently received the Purple Heart Medal for wounds that he received in Vietnam over 25 years ago. While I do not argue that Mr. Babbit is eligible for the award, I have serious problems with the circumstances surrounding Mr. Babbit's application for the Purple Heart Medal. With no other choice, the military approved the award, which was required by Mr. Babbit's attorney, Charles Patterson.

I find the timing of Mr. Babbit's reception of this award troubling. Assuming the worst case scenario, Mr. Babbit is attempting to use the honor that comes along with reception of this medal to curry favor with an appellate judge to reduce his sentence or grant him a new trial. I find it appalling that someone would attempt to bring dishonor to an award granted to individuals who bravely fought for the greatness of the nation by using it to assist a murderer's appeal process.

H.R. 3970 would help put an end to problems like this. It would also go a long way to preserving the honor and dignity of the Purple Heart Medal. This legislation would prohibit the awarding of the Purple Heart Medal to individuals convicted of Federal Capital Offenses. The measure does not address eligibility for the award, but rather denies reception of the award for convicted Capital Offenders. The legislation is not retro-active and would not strip individuals of the Purple Heart Medal who had received the award prior to their con-

viction. Finally, the legislation is narrow in focus and would only apply to a very select group of individuals that have committed the most heinous crimes in our society.

Mr. Speaker, it is not often that we can act before a problem occurs, but that is exactly what this Congress can do on this matter. This legislation has been endorsed by the Military Order of the Purple Heart and was introduced with the support of the House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Stump. I would urge my colleagues to help preserve the dignity of the Purple Heart by co-sponsoring this important legislation.

IN HONOR OF RALPH A. VASEY

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the achievements of Ralph Vasey on the occasion of his 80th birthday.

Ralph Vasey, a boxer in his teens, joined the Marine Corps and served diligently in the second world war, where he was wounded three times. He returned home to the honorable trade of Roofer, Waterproofing and Allied Worker. He held offices, including that of the president, for Local 44 through three decades; and was among the founders of the Pension Fund and Health and Welfare Fund for Local 44. Ralph Vasey has been a hard and industrious worker in all his pursuits and exemplifies the American Spirit. He worked with his hands and built a life he can be proud of. He has not only helped himself, but also persevered to help those in his community.

Ralph Vasey is also a devoted family man. He is the proud father of Michael. And his two granddaughters, Jenelle and Carrie, have made him a great grandfather of Jonathan, Brandon, Michael, Nicholas, Mikayla and soon to arrive Justin. In all his pursuits, Ralph Vasey has not lost sight of what is truly important: His family.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in recognizing the life accomplishments of a father, grandfather and great-grandfather, and a veteran of our country, Ralph Vasey, on his 80th birthday.

146TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRAGEDY AT EL PUEBLO, CO

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, Whereas, in 1842, El Pueblo was built a few miles above the junction of the Napeste River, present day Arkansas River, and Fontaine-qui-bouille, present day Fountain Creek, just north of the Mexican Border, and

Whereas, the Native American inhabitants of the area, had been displaced from their homes without regard to their survival and had suffered immensely, and

Whereas, at Christmas 1854 a party of Utes, and some Jicarilla Apaches, led by Chief Tierra Blanca fought with the occupants of El Pueblo resulting in the deaths of at least twelve Spanish surnamed individuals, and the capture of the two boys, and the deaths of an unknown number of Native Americans, and

Whereas, the settlers killed at El Pueblo were early residents of Pueblo, braving new frontiers and looking for a better way of life, and became victims at a time when cultures were in conflict, and

Whereas, it has been one-hundred forty-four years since the tragedy at El Pueblo.

Now, therefore, I Scott McInnis, a United States Congressman from the State of Colorado, on behalf of the Fray Angelico Chavez Hispanic Genealogical Society of Southern Colorado, proclaim this a significant event in Pueblo and Colorado's history and what led to this tragedy could have been prevented by the promotion of greater understanding between peoples and cultures and should never be allowed to happen again.

TRIBUTE TO DR. GERALD FROM

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 29, 1998

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay a respectful tribute to Dr. Gerald From, who has provided invaluable services to the South Bronx Mental Health Council since 1969 and made a tremendous contribution to the Gouverneur Hospital Community Advisory Board.

A long-time resident of New York, Dr. From received his B.A. from Yeshiva University, his Masters in Counseling Psychology from Columbia Teachers College and his Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Counseling from New York University in 1987.

A man of many talents, Dr. From is a licensed substitute teacher for the New York City school system, as well as a rehabilitation counselor and a psychologist. He has worked at the Rockland County Center for the physically handicapped, the Pesach Tikvah Guidance Center, and he also ran his own part-time private practice.

Dr. From has made significant contributions to the Bronx Mental Health Clinics. In a variety of capacities during his 28 years of service there, he acted as both a senior and a supervising vocational rehabilitation counselor.

Dr. From impact on the New York community has also been profound. He was a remedial mathematics teacher at an antipoverty program called Project Talent, and he served as an audiometric tester for the Jewish Educational Committee, testing thousands of youngsters for hearing defects. He has served

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